

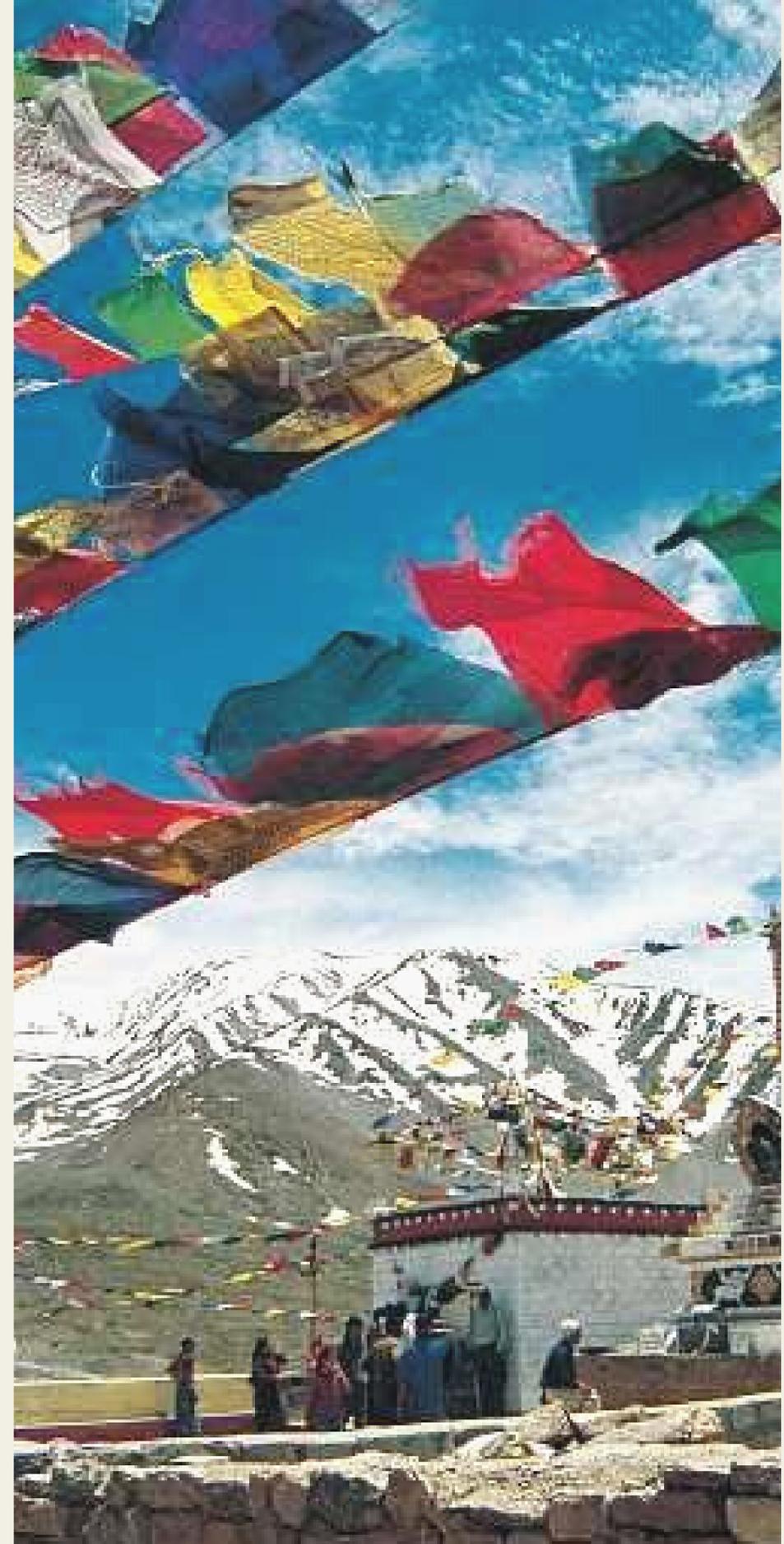
A traveller's guide



# Spiti - The Long Way Around



What's the rush? Slow it down, take your time. Let the magic of these mountains unfold slowly before you. This tour is designed to allow you to experience the diversity of the landscape, culture, food and accommodation options along the way.



Spiti provides everything the soul needs to thrive. From the fragrance of the mountains to the flow of clear springs. The rhythmic chants of the monks and the whirl of the wind across the river valley. The golden rays of the morning sun and the gentle warmth of the crimson orb at the end of the day.



Day 1- Chandigarh - Narkanda

Driving time -6hrs

Distance -175kms



Our driver picks you from Chandigarh to take you to Narkanda. You ascend gradually through the Shivalik range driving through pine forest to spend the night at the charming Tethey's resort where a bonfire awaits you.

The drive close to Narkanda is along dense deodar forests and apple orchards. A night at 2700mts will acclimatize you before you reach the higher Himalayas and on route you can enjoy a lunch in one of the many Dhabas. Your driver will know the best one.

We recommend a start before noon to make the most of the property and you can also walk around the forest in the area.

Start to Sarahan next morning is not early so if you feel like sleeping in, take the opportunity.



Day 2- Narkanda -Sarahan

Driving time -3hrs

Distance -105kms

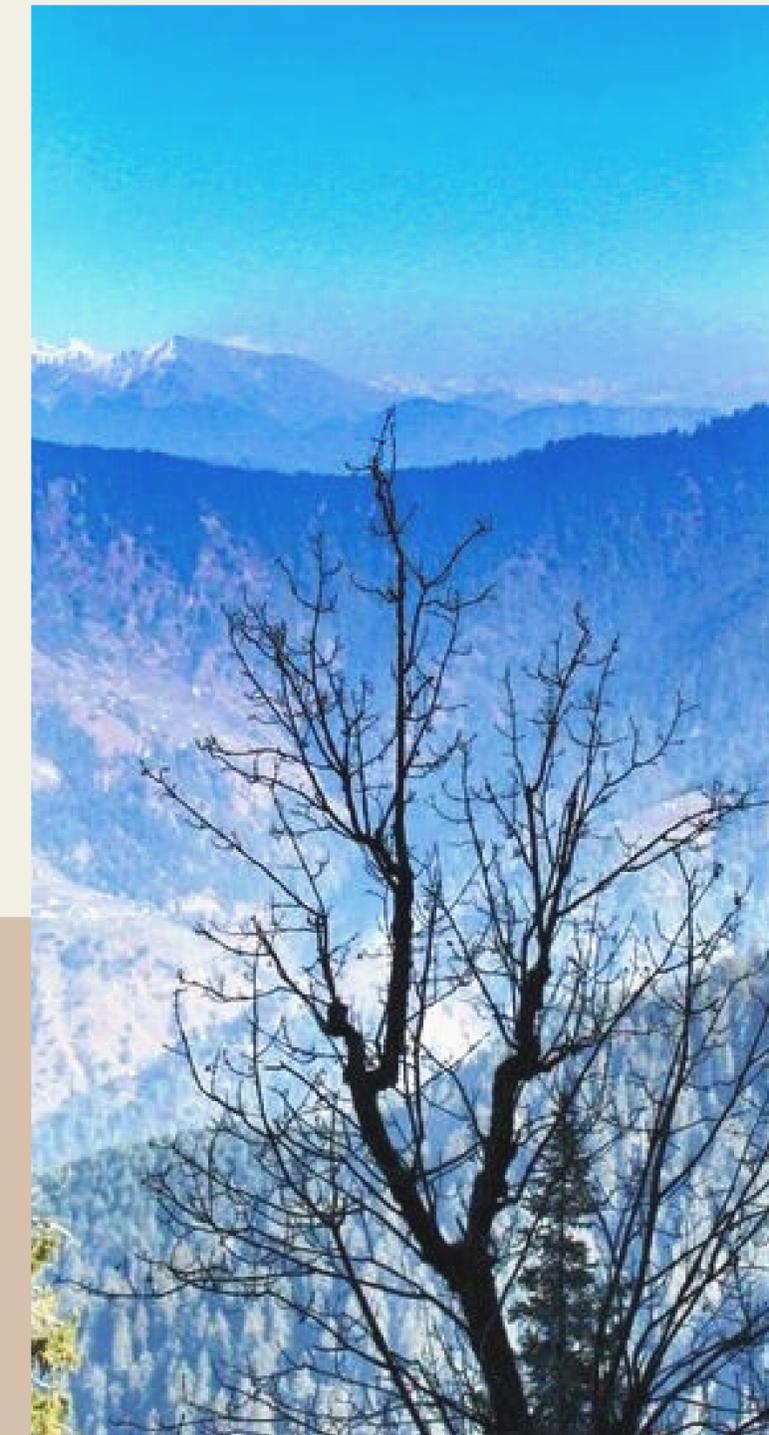
Summer capital during the Bushahr kingdom, Saharan has a panoramic view of Shrikhand range.

Built by the Bushahr kingdom, the Bhimakali temple (local version of Kali) is the highlight of the day. A beautiful example of Indo-Tibetan architecture and the first real sign that you are making your way to the greater Himalayan range. The construction is of layered stone and timber (to absorb an earthquakes), topped with intricately carved wood paneling and a heavy slated roof.

Spitians have been trading with the Bushahr kingdom for centuries. Only a few decades ago Spiti was cut off from the world and even today some travel to the area every year to sell the Chamurti horse, native to Spiti.

In the evening you can drive to the nearby villages to admire the houses made of grey slated stones and apple orchards.

And if you are lucky you might come across the Devta, a local deity being carried on palanquin.



Day 3- Saharan - Sangla

Driving time -3hrs

Distance -85kms



Another stunning day on the Indo-Tibetian highway. Kinnaur like Spiti remained closed to the outside world till 1989. Blessed with magnificent mountain and valley scenery, a distinctive cultural and ethnic mix changes from Hindu to Tibetan Buddhist as you progress eastward.

This is a land of ridge-villages with slate-roofed temples and apple orchards separated by gorges and snowcapped peaks. Proud and friendly people, Kinnauris can be recognized by their short cylindrical

hats with a half-round flash of green or red felt on the upturned lappet.

You can spend the evening either visiting the Kamru fort known for its tower-like wooden structure. According to a folklore in the fort there are about 33 crore gods and goddess residing. You can also stroll around some of the other villages in Sangla or make a day trip to Chitkul.

The night would be spent enjoying the hospitality of Captain Sood, owner of Banjara camps by the banks of the Baspa river.



Day 4- Sangla - Kanam - Nako

Driving time -6hrs

Distance -175kms



The change in landscape, architecture, clothing and religion is even starker today. Coniferous forest gives way to desolate mountains. While the Kinnauri hat remains, you'll see women wear jewelry using turquoise. Slate roofs give way to flat Tibetan roofs and Dhabas sell momos. Short of Nako you will cross the confluence of the Satluj (with its source at Mansoravar lake) and Spiti river before starting a steep climb. En route you will spend time at the rarely visited Kanam monastery where the first translation of Buddhist philosophy into an European language took place by a Hungarian monk. Part of the western Tibet or Guge Empire, Nako means 'the place from where one starts a pilgrimage'. Dating back to the 11th century, Nako monastery is one of the most important gompas in the region and was built during the second propagation of Buddhism in Tibet.



Day 5 - Nako - Gyu - Tabo - Dhankar -  
Lalung - Mane  
Driving time -150kms  
Distance -5hrs

First stop for the day is at Gyu to see the mummy of a 15th-century Buddhist monk. Recent research papers suggest that the monk underwent self-mummification. A ritual undertaken by highly devoted and able spiritual masters who would starve themselves to death very slowly in order to reach the highest form of enlightenment.

From Gyu passing scattered villages in this serrated moonscape while driving next to the turquoise-grey ribbon of the Spiti river you would reach Tabo monastery. Built in 996AD, Tabo is noted for being the oldest continuously operating

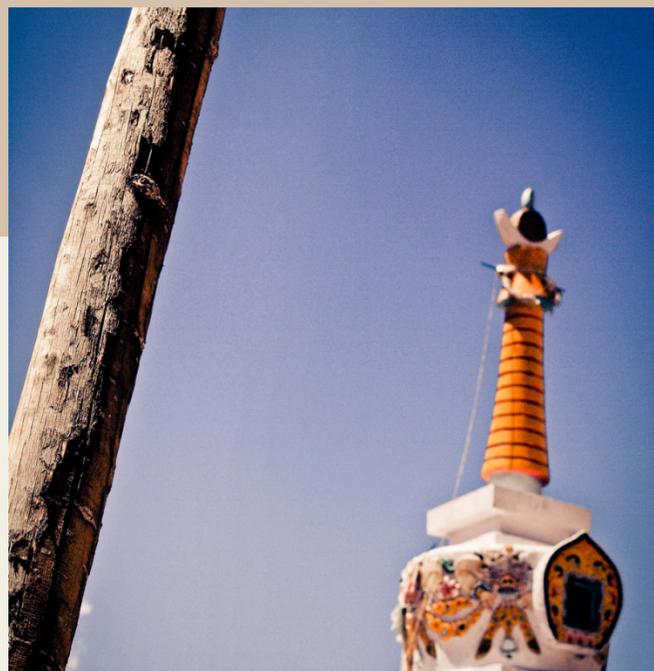
Buddhist enclave in both India and the Himalayas. Up next is a visit to Dhankar fort and Lalung monastery both of which are over a 1000 years old.

For the night you will be hosted by Lobzang and her husband Sonam at their homestay in Mane. Keep your stomachs empty because Lobzang is sure to lay out a feast.

Day 6 - Mane - Mane lake - Kaza  
Driving time -1hr 30min  
Distance -35kms



A three hour trek takes you to Mane lake situated at the base of the Manerang glacier. If you're lucky you may come across the Bharal (Blue sheep) which is a mix between a goat and a sheep, the Tibetan fox and also the Stone Martyn. This area is full of partridges, vultures and eagles. You will also notice a change in the flora as you trek up to 4100mts.



Lunch would be organized by the lake and another short stop before Kaza will allow you to explore 1500 year year old rock carvings which showcase Buddhist and pre Buddhist markings on stones. There are some hunting scenes depicted on the petroglyphs as well from a time when people lived in caves in the area. For the night you would head to Hotel Deyzor to be taken care of by Karan and his team.



Day 7 - Kaza - Hikkim - Komic- Langza/Kaza

Driving time - 3hrs

Distance -45kms

A relatively short day starts with a visit to Komic via Hikkim. Hikkim's claim to fame besides its setting is its world's highest post office.

Komic is the highest inhabited place in the world at 4600mts. Or at least that's what the government says. The views are breathtaking and Komic also has a monastery from the 13th century.

After Komic you will head to Langza where lunch will be served at a homestay. At Langza you can also try your hand digging for marine fossils, some of them being over 100million year old.

For the night you can either head back to Kaza or choose to stay at a homestay in Langza



Day 8 - Langza/Kaza - Ki -Kumzum pass-  
Losar/Chandertal lake  
Driving time -5hrs  
Distance -100kms

Covering a conical hillock with whitewashed monastic buildings, Ki gompa is one of the most photographed sights of Himachal and houses nearly 300 monks. Making it the largest in the area. In the upper library, is the bed that was used by the Dalai Lama during his visits in 1960 and 2000. There is a puja every morning and after Ki you would head to Chandertal lake via Kibber and Chichim.

Before reaching the lake you will drive past the soaring 4551mts Kunzum Pass with the Spiti River as your near constant companion, although sometimes way below in precipitous gorges.

A fitting place to end your trip, this glorious glacial lake (Chandertal) presents mirror-perfect reflections of the surrounding white-top peaks. You can choose either to camp at 4270mts for the night or head lower to Losar. A walk around the lake is sure to get you breathless, but it's well worth the effort.



Day 9 - Chandertal lake - Rohtang pass -  
Manali

Driving time - 7hrs

Distance -140kms

On the last day of the trip you can reflect on everything you saw and experienced while travelling. As you exist this spectacular landscape with jagged peaks, arid mountains, fluttering prayer flags and whitewashed stupas, you can excuse yourself for feeling overwhelmed. Spiti it a little corner of India but has more to teach the outside world than to learn from it. Especially regarding ecological sustainability.

# Trip summary -

Day 1- Chandigarh - Narkanda

Driving time -6/7hrs, Distance -175kms, Accommodation at - Tethy's

Day 2- Narkanda - Saharan

Driving time -3hrs, Distance -105kms, Accommodation at - HPTDC hotel

Day 3- Saharan - Sangla

Driving time -3hrs, Distance -85kms, Accommodation at - Banjara retreat

Day 4 Sangla - Kanam - Nako

Driving time -6hrs, Distance -185kms, Accommodation at - Kinnar camps

Day 5- Nako - Gyu - Tabo - Dhankar - Lalung - Mane

Driving time -5hrs, Distance -150kms, Accommodation at - Lobzang homestay

Day 6 - Mane - Kaza

Driving time -1.5hrs, Distance -35kms, Accommodation at - Hotel Deyzor

Day 7- Kaza - Hikkim - Komic - Langza/Kaza

Driving time -3hrs, Distance -45kms, Accommodation at - Lara homestay/Hotel Deyzor

Day 8- Kaza/Langza - Ki - Kibber - Chichim - Losar - Kunzum Pass - Chandertal lake

Driving time -5hrs, Distance -100kms, Accommodation at -

Parasol campsite or Samsong campsite

Day 9- Chandertal lake - Manali

Driving time -7hrs, Distance -100kms, Accommodation at - Casa Bella Vista

Day 10 - Manali - Chandigarh, Driving time - 8/9hrs